Jones' Son Claims Role In Killing of 4 in Guyana

By Charles A. Krause 12-14-78
Washington Post Foreign Service

GEORGETOWN, Guyana, Dec. 18—Stephen Jones, the 19-year-old son of the late Rev. Jim Jones, sarcastically blurted out during a tense court proceeding here today that he ordered the throats of four Peoples Temple members slashed shortly after word of the Nov. 18 mass suicide-murder of Jonestown reached the Temple's headquarters in Georgetown.

Jones' statement came during reexamination of his testimony at an inquest now underway here to determine whether Charles Beikman, who has been charged with actually killing the four, will stand trial in connection with the deaths.

After his court appearance, an obviously shaken and confused Jones said he had made the statement only because of hostile questions from the prosecutor, Nandram Kissoon. Jones denied that he actually had anything to do with ordering the deaths of Linda Sharon Amos and her three children.

C. A. (Skip) Roberts, Guyana's assistant police commissioner for criminal matters, said later that he will investigate Jones' "confession" and will decide Tuesday whether or not Jones should be charged. Roberts said Jones already had been investigated in connection with the four slayings. Roberts said he did not believe new evidence would be uncovered to warrant charges against Jones.

Jones, a charismatic young man known to have a quick temper, has been detained since Nov. 18 at the Peoples Temple's house here, where he was staying when the mass suicide-murder occurred and where Amos and her three children died. He was not, according to him, present at the house when the deaths occurred, however.

Meanwhile, the Soviet embassy here, obviously embarrassed by letters made public yesterday directing that more than $7 million in Peoples Temple money be transferred to the Soviet Union, said today that it knew nothing of the bequest or of the letters and had made no effort to collect the money.

Sources close to the Guyanese government said that the Soviet embassy had not been notified of the letters or their content before the documents were disclosed in court yesterday. One source said that the decision not to inform the Soviets of the letters reflects a growing chill between the socialist government of Prime Minister Forbes Burnham and the Soviet Union, which has not provided Burnham with the economic assistance he had hoped for.

Aleksander Kramarenko, who identified himself as an attache at the Soviet embassy in Georgetown, after first saying that the embassy "wouldn't like to make any comment on the Jonestown tragedy," gave noncommittal answers to questions asked by American reporters.

Asked if the Soviet government would acrept the Peoples Temple money, which is deposited in banks in Panama and Venezuela, Kramarenko said, "We haven't heard anything about that. It seems strange to us" that the money would have been bequeathed to the Soviet Union, he added.

Kramarenko said that "our government has nothing to do with that organization and can have no relationship with that organization."